

Speech of Senator Wadsworth on Bill for War Cabinet

DIAGRAM OF MR. BAKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

production and initial distribution of the vast amount of supplies must be essentially an industrial operation, and that military men, no matter how distinguished and capable in their profession, are, with very rare exceptions, inexperienced in such matters and therefore incapable of bringing about the best results in the shortest possible time.

"We found also that, in addition to this fundamental handicap, these supply bureaus were further handicapped, and very seriously, by a condition which springs from years of routine operation, regulated and checked down to the last crossing of a 't' and dotting of an 'i,' which condition is popularly described as due to 'red tape.'

"The military channels through which a matter must proceed are so long, and so tortuous and so numerous and so minute are the formalities and departmental customs which must be followed that exceedingly grave delays have occurred.

"Some of the incidents might be regarded as uproariously funny, were the situation less serious.

"War Machinery Slow and Creaking"

"In a word, we found the machinery slow and creaking, and in some important instances the engine stalled."

"In addition to the army officers who appeared before us we obtained exceedingly valuable testimony from representatives of some of our great manufacturing plants. Their testimony, I believe, broadened our view of the situation and painted more vividly the great picture of industrial effort, from which we have gathered the deep impression that there was lack of comprehension of the manufacturer's problems on the part of official Washington; lack of coordination; an inability to reach prompt decision; in fact, that the system itself was faulty in the extreme.

"Then we had before us some of the exceedingly able civilians who were summoned to Washington just before or soon after our entrance into the war, and who have devoted their time and efforts in helping the government. These men have lived close to the problem for many months; they have watched the working of the machinery at close range; they are thoroughly informed upon the situation and they have told us about it. Each of them has pointed out and explained the defects which the members of the committee had begun to suspect before they appeared before us. Each of them suggested one or more remedies, one or more improvements, and all their suggestions are in the same direction, to wit, the proper centralization of authority—an authority established preferably by statute, an authority whose decision may be promptly reached and accepted as final.

"No Human Being Can Perform Such a Task"

"I realize that some may contend that the President of the United States, the commander in chief of the army and the navy, the leader of the nation in this war, can make all these decisions, and that there is, therefore, no need for any additional element in the war-making machinery. My contention is that, be he ever so able, no President, no human being, can perform such a task. It is utterly impossible for one man to examine into all these intricate questions. The days and the nights are not long enough to permit of his doing such a thing.

"He carries, even in time of peace, a terrific burden, and to ask him to assume the task of studying and planning these tremendous, intricate, industrial, social, economic and military undertakings is to ask the impossible.

"I would be content that this same state of affairs continue for a short time were I convinced that the war would end in a short time. We could probably proceed a little while longer; and if the end were surely in sight we would not need to concern ourselves very much with our war-making machinery. But I entertain the deep conviction that the end is not in sight; that we shall have to travel a long, hard road before we reach the goal. I feel certain that the strain will grow more and more severe as the months go by.

"America's effort must constantly expand; we must send more and more troops abroad; we must build more and more ships to carry them; we must grow more and more food to feed them and to feed our allies also; we must make use of an ever-increasing percentage of our mines, transportation facilities and manufacturing facilities in order that they may be turned to a degree surpassing the armament of our enemies; that they may be fed and clothed and cared for.

"Indeed, as I view this situation, we are only upon the threshold of this tremendous undertaking, and as time goes on it will demand of the country and absorb from the country more and more of its man power and its resources. Convinced as I am that this prospect is surely before us, I am not satisfied that we have the kind of organization and machinery that can stand the strain.

Shows Organization By Charts on Wall

"Now, let Senators go back for a moment and discuss the machinery that we now have. I took the liberty a few days ago of having hung upon the walls some charts. Perhaps I may

discuss the organization as depicted on these charts in such a way as to make it reasonably plain.

"In the first place, the chart in the center, hanging highest, is the chart showing the organization of the War Department itself when we went into this war and as it continued to be organized during the summer and the autumn.

"That organization, you will see, resulted in the supply bureaus of the War Department, headed, respectively, by the quartermaster general, the chief of ordnance, the chief signal officer, the chief of coast artillery, reporting direct to the Secretary of War, and not through the General Staff. It was possible, therefore, for the five different supply bureaus in the War Department to report directly to the heads of the Chief of Staff and go direct to the Secretary of War and, if possible, persuade him to do what each one, or any one, of those individuals thought ought to be done.

"I congratulate, and the committee, I think, congratulates, the Secretary of War for having changed that organization, and for having endeavored to organize the inferior machinery of the War Department upon modern military lines.

"The reorganization is depicted in the chart which hangs to the right near the door, which shows the War Department's bureaus divided into two groups, one group the supply bureaus and the other group the administrative bureaus, each reporting to its chief and those men reporting through the Chief of Staff to the Secretary of War. That is the organization of the War Department as it exists to-day.

"You will see that, five supply bureaus—quartermaster, ordnance, engineers, signal corps, heavy artillery and the food administration—have been brought into the War Department, as I remember it, as it is termed.

Major Generals Put Under a Colonel

"The Secretary of War explained to the committee how that we were to operate. He said that Colonel Pierce was to be placed in the position of assistant, to compel coordination of the five purchasing bureaus. Colonel Pierce, of course, was outranked by the five major generals who respectively command the five supply bureaus under him. The Secretary of War said they could easily avoid that handicap by making Colonel Pierce a major general.

"We have been informed that Mr. Stettinius has been appointed in some capacity to assist in the coordination of the purchasing of the War Department. It is difficult to understand just what he comes in for, probably his authority is advisory. Under the law and under military, he cannot have any authority except advisory authority and, in this case, indeed, probable that he is the assistant of the Chief of Staff. That brings up the question of how an individual from civil life, an expert in his business, can help out the military operation of supply without having authority definite and absolute.

"I have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Stettinius, have only heard of him, but if he takes advice from one humble individual he will decline to put on a uniform, for the instant he does it the consciousness of rank must invade his mind. He will be subject to the orders of some one else, and once again the great talents of the business man will not be exerted to their full effect.

"The Committee on Military Affairs has proposed in the bill creating a department of munitions to have it headed by a civilian not subject to the orders of any military officer, a man who can grasp great business problems, a man clothed with authority to go out and do things and supply the different branches of the government that need the supplies.

"The interior reorganization of the War Department without question constituted a great improvement upon the organization that existed prior to December, but it does not meet, in my humble judgment, the real point at issue in this discussion. It affects only the War Department, and such civilians as they have summoned to assist it have not been clothed with authority to act. They are very largely performing an advisory function.

Cannot Take Power Away From President

"At the head of the entire organization stands the President of the United States, under the Constitution and the laws of our country. No one in his senses would propose that any other office be created to take away from the President the power that the Constitution confides in him. It cannot be done. It is unthinkable.

"There is not a business corporation on earth that could do business for one year's time with such an organization as we have in our war-making machinery to-day. Ask any business man, ask any man versed in the usages and customs of industry; and this war, Senators, is a great industrial effort. The martial industries of America and her allies against the marshalled industries of the Teutonic powers—ask any man accustomed to handling great industrial problems if the organization as depicted upon this chart on the left, the organization of the war-making machinery of the United States government, is a proper and efficient organization, and he is compelled to answer you in the negative. It cannot be done. It will do some things well, it will do some great things, but it cannot

do all the things at the time when they ought to be done. It is impossible.

"Now, let us see how it works or how it endeavors to work at this time. And, mind you, Senators, my criticism is not directed against any individual—against any one department. This is not one of individual bureaus or departments. It is one affecting organization.

"The army needs vast amounts of supplies. It purchases them through five purchasing bureaus. The navy needs vast amounts of supplies. It purchases its supplies largely through one bureau. The Shipping Board needs a tremendous amount of material. The Allies need a tremendous amount of material.

Wadsworth Points Out Forgotten Departments

"The chart that I have hung here is an exact copy of the chart given to the Committee on Military Affairs by the Secretary of War. On it are recited the War Department and its bureaus, the Navy Department and its bureaus, the Shipping Board and the Allied purchasing bodies. That was the painting of the picture given to us by the Secretary of War. But Senators, the food administration has been forgotten and so has the railway administration, and so have the purchasing enormous quantities of supplies.

"They must be coordinated, and according to the system now in vogue, when any one of those purchasing agents—and there are something over a dozen, perhaps twenty, of them—makes up its mind that it wants to buy some article it proceeds to the office of the War Industries Board, and is there referred to the committee on purchases, which consists of half a dozen gentlemen, who advise the purchasing officers as they arrive where they can buy the

back the wheels of machinery one day.

"Now, what is the proposal? We all know that the army needs a vast amount of steel for forging our heavy artillery. We know that the navy

steel for those four agencies shall be centralized in one department, so that the steel producing industry of the country can be organized for one great purpose; can be disciplined, as it were, in its spirit and what it means, some of the criticisms that have been made against it. The bill provides: 'Who, under the President, shall have and shall exercise, either directly or through any other agents or agencies of the government that the President may designate for the purpose.' There

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